DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 997 CG 028 451

AUTHOR Richardson, Rita Coombs
TITLE Social Skills Instruction for Culturally Diverse Adolescents with Behavioral Deficits.
PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Super Conference on Special Education (18th, Baton Rouge, LA, March 30-April 2, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Behavior Development; *Cross Cultural Training; *Cultural Pluralism; *Cultural Relevance; *Interpersonal Competence; Social Behavior; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Louisiana

ABSTRACT

Strategies for teaching social skills to students from diverse cultural groups are described. Teaching social skills accepted by the majority culture empowers students to function successfully in inclusive society. It is a proactive approach to managing behavior for culturally diverse adolescents with behavior deficits. To teach these skills effectively teachers must put aside stereotypes, target the social skills needing development, and identify successful methodologies. The following cultural groups are specifically considered: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American. For each group, a review of the issues, including the scope and nature of the need in Louisiana, and certain strategies found to be effective with that group are presented. The strategies most frequently suggested are: direct instruction, cooperative learning, integrated thematic instructions, bibliotherapy, and strategies from applied behavioral analysis. In addition, procedures from humanistic and ecological approaches are presented. Many of the suggested strategies are suitable for students from all cultures and ethnic backgrounds when teachers individualize these strategies to meet the individual needs of each student. Contains 23 references. (Author/EMK)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 419 997

# Social Skills Instruction for Culturally Diverse Adolescents with Behavioral Deficits

**Dr. Rita Coombs Richardson**
**Associate Professor**
**Southeastern Louisiana University**
**Department of Special Education**
**University Box 879**
**Hammond, Louisiana: 70403**
**Phone: (504) 549-2214**
**FAX: (504) 549-5030**
**e-mail: rrichardson@selu.edu**

**Paper presented at the 18th Annual Super Conference on Special Education**
***Individual Differences: Leaving Our Mark On The World***

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana: March 30-April 2. 1998**
**Louisiana Federation : Council for Exceptional Children**

CG028451

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R Coombs Richardson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

## Abstract

The paper describes strategies for teaching social skills to students from diverse cultural groups; African American, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. The strategies most frequently suggested are: Direct Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Integrated Thematic Instruction, Bibliotherapy, and strategies from Applied Behavioral Analysis. In addition, procedures from Humanistic and Ecological approaches are also presented.

**Social Skills Instruction for Culturally Diverse Adolescents with Behavioral Deficits**

Culture is defined as the customary beliefs, social forms, traits, and language, of a racial, religious or social unit. We often form expectations of individuals based on cultural generalizations even though it is erroneous to believe that all members of a group have the same traits of the group as a whole. Cultural misunderstanding and stereotyping can negatively impact a society. The melting pot theory has hurt many subcultures who simply cannot melt because of racial features, skin color, or language. Stereotypes generally reinforce our beliefs, especially when we are conditioned by the media portraying poverty and violence as conditions of race and ethnicity. We must bear in mind that stigmatizing, categorizing, and generalizing about abilities, personality characteristics, and learning styles can limit individuals and groups of people (Griggs & Dunn, 1989). Nevertheless, awareness, understanding and acceptance of differences can positively affect interactions and learning.

Gwendolyn Cartledge (1996), proposes that the behaviors of students from culturally diverse populations need to be perceived from a cultural view point and that instruction should be directed to affirm and empower students to succeed. She suggests that despite difference ascribed to cultural heritage, commonalities must also be recognized. However, we must recognize that different cultures hold varying behavioral expectations and home discipline methods may range from permissive to authoritarian. It is undoubtedly helpful to understand cultural characteristics; people connected by culture generally hold similar social mores. Nevertheless, individuals from sub-cultures also exhibit commonalities of the larger culture in which they live, and while they wish to preserve their traditions, they also wish to belong to the greater society. Therefore, the behaviors of children and adolescents from diverse populations must be considered within a culturally relevant framework as well as within the background of the culture at large.

After years of concentrated efforts to desegregate schools, a preponderance of students from minority groups attend segregated schools. The majority of students in the 25 largest public school systems are students of color. While these students are the majority, the teaching staff remains predominately white (King, 1993). This trend will continue to exist in spite of innovative programs to recruit candidates from minority cultures. We cannot change demography; therefore, we need to address the serious implications resulting from the student/teacher mis-match. If a safe and orderly climate is necessary for effective schools, then teachers must be trained or re-trained to understand how cultures affect student behavior.

Teaching social skills accepted by the majority culture empowers students to function successfully in inclusive society. When children internalize socially acceptable behaviors such as self-control, conflict resolution, effective communication, and cooperation, they are less likely

to misbehave. To effectively teach these skills, teachers must first put aside self-fulling prophecies and stereotypes: (1) that children from minority cultures are expected to have higher incidents of behavior problems than any other groups, (2) that children from minority cultures are less competent than their majority peers, and (3) that parents from disadvantaged homes do not care about their children. The next step is to target social skills needing development, and to identify teaching methodologies and strategies found to be successful with students from culturally diverse groups. Strategies from the Humanistic, Cognitive and Ecological models as well as the Behavioral model are effective for teaching pro-social skills. Direct instruction, integrated learning, cooperative learning, multisensory activities, and attention to learning styles, are recommended to teach students from minority groups. Direct instruction is used in numerous social skills programs to teach conflict resolution, positive communication, responsible assertion, and social amenities. Thematic integrated learning is motivating, fosters generalization, transference and maintenance of learned skills. Cooperative learning helps students develop an awareness of the drawbacks of competitive learning and teaches exploration of cooperative alternatives. Students are more likely to learn and recall information when they are taught through multi-modal channels: hearing, seeing, touching, and doing.

**Minority Groups In Louisiana Schools**

Close to fifty percent of the cultural configuration of Louisiana's school population is considered minority; African Americans have traditionally made up a large percent of students, and presently account for approximately 46% of the student body. Asian Americans are the second largest minority group at 1.30%, and Hispanic Americans are the fastest growing minority group in Louisiana and represent 1.10% of the educational enrollment. Non-Hispanic Whites make up 51%, and Native Americans number to less than 1% (Bulletin 1472, 1996). Minority students are the majority in many urban schools in Louisiana and throughout the United States. However, school systems are generally structured according to Anglo traditions even when the composition of students consists of a predominately minority culture. Educators, regardless of race or ethnicity, must be cognizant of the various cultures of their students to effectively implement instruction as well as effective behavior management procedures.

**African-Americans**

The constant media portrayal of Black crime and violence has resulted in negative social attitudes and feelings of suspicion and mistrust towards African Americans. This perception in turn results in the development of poor self-concept and feelings of inferiority in African American students. White is beautiful and Black is not.

In spite of social and educational problems, the African American community has many strengths, and the support of extended family member contributes to emotional and social stability. The Black is Beautiful movement has helped in the development of self-acceptance and self-esteem. More Black role models are recognized and are held up for children to emulate.

Increasingly more Black families are moving into middle class status as a result of legislation, education, and high paying job opportunities. The school drop out rate of African American students has steadily declined. In 1970, 12.8% of students between the ages of 16 and 17 , and 31.2% between the ages of 18 and 19 did not graduate from high school. The 1996 report shows significant progress; 6.2% of students between the ages of 16 and 17, and 14.4% between the ages of 18 and 19 did not complete their formal education (Snyder, Hoffman, & Geddes, 1997 ). This indicates a decrease of approximately 47%. In addition, greater number of high school graduates are opting to seek college degrees. Schools are more in tune with multicultural education, and educators are paying attention to various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and teaching procedures to counteract failure.

Numerous school districts have selected programs to teach social competence and to prevent aggression and violence. The following procedures, direct instruction, cooperative learning, integrated thematic learning, self-management, role-playing, conflict resolution, and behavioral strategies are suggested to make instruction more relevant for African Americans.

**Direct Instruction:** Direct instruction of skills can be useful when the content is culturally relevant and meaningful to African American students. It is especially useful when instruction is started in the early years of development. Teachers and parents can unite in managing children's behaviors without sounding threatening or punitive (if you act bad, I'll tell the police). A skill can be taught directly and reinforced through various class projects. An important component of direct teaching is progress evaluation and feedback. Teachers can construct simple benchmarks to assess whether the skills are being mastered. In addition, Socratic questioning throughout the teaching process is important to involve the students in their learning. Time must be allowed for discussion and students must feel free to present opposing views. They must also be taught how to defend their opinions and accept the view points of other.

**Cooperative Learning:** African American are people oriented, are inclined to work in teams, and generally prefer collaboration over competition. Prior to a cooperative learning experience, the teacher must outline rules governing cooperative groups and provide training in resolving problems within the group. Students are taught listening and communication skills and how to brainstorm solutions to problems. As the students develop these skills, they are allowed to develop their own group rules, and select group leaders. Leadership within the group can be rotated to give each member decision-making training and experiences in self-worth.

**Integrated Thematic Learning**: Many African American students tend to be global learners and are motivated to learn when concepts are integrated, and tasks are presented holistically. An integrated thematic learning unit can be designed to incorporate various academic areas to teach a social skill. For example, if violence is the theme, the students trace the evolution of violence from the slavery experience to the violent behaviors of the Ku Klux Klan and the contrasting

peaceful marches of Martin Luther King (history). The emotional and physical effects of violence on individuals or societies are researched and studied (science). Students are directed to write a song or rap on violence (music). They are encouraged to write poems or stories on violence (language) or express violent behavior in a drawing, painting, or a collage (art). They calculate, find averages, make up graphs of violence statistics in their community or state (math).

**Self-Management:** Students can be taught self-management skills through self-recording strategies. Teacher can teach students self-recording through the use of counters and self-graphing. Richardson and Evans (1998) propose four steps, "Stop, Think, Plan, and Check" to help students practice self-control and develop plans to solve problems. Students are encouraged to record target behaviors in a daily journal and use computer programs to graph and evaluate their progress. Cognitive strategies can help students become aware of their behaviors and the impact of these behaviors on themselves and on others.

**Role-Playing:** Role playing presents opportunities to act out aggressive behaviors and to develop problem solving skills. The teacher introduces relevant role playing situations, or students, working in cooperative groups, generate their own topics and scripts. They are guided in producing, directing, and video taping their production. Role playing may also consist of simple short scripts acted out in the classroom.

**Conflict Resolution:** Direct teaching of conflict resolution techniques includes skills in mediation, negotiation, compromise, and group problem solving. Peer mediators are trained to direct the disputing parties towards acceptable solutions. They referee a dispute by offering opportunities to each party to relate their respective sides without interruption. The mediator's responsibility is to guide the negotiation toward a resolution. In many instances, the disputing parties maintain honor and self-respect through fair compromise.

**Behavioral Strategies:** Strategies from the behavioral model can produce significant changes in behavior. The principle of positive reinforcement cannot be minimized, and teachers who "catch students being good" can establish a positive climate in their classrooms. The Premack Principle or Grandma's Law imposes "I - then" contingencies and sends an important message; "**if** you stop interrupting and finish your work, **then** you can play on the computer." Token economy systems are socially valid reinforcers, and can be exchanged for tangible goods or activity privileges. Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of modeling on the acquisition of pro-social behaviors. Many African American males lack male models; male administrators, teachers coaches, bus drivers, and other school personnel, need to examine their planned as well as their incidental behaviors modeled throughout the day.

Another useful behavioral strategy is differential reinforcement. We generally expect children to immediately extinguish an inappropriate behavior, and assume an "either or" attitude.

Differential reinforcement of lower rates of behavior (DRL) reinforces small decreases in behavior. Depending on the type of behavior, students are reinforced when they reduce the occurrences and the severity of the behavior. For example: Joshua has a nasty habit of using curse words, and is consequently referred to the office to be disciplined. The teacher establishes baseline by drawing a graph indicating the number of "visits" to the office. The teacher schedules a time for a private conference and explains to Joshua how they can work together to reduce the cursing occurrences as well as the office visits. They both decide on a plan which includes a goal, (to extinguish cursing) a reinforcement menu, and a reinforcement schedule. If his cursing rate is less than 6 per day, he may select one reinforcer. If he can reduce cursing to 5 per day, he may
select two reinforcers, and so on. The teacher and Joshua daily monitor and graph the progress.

**Asian Americans**

The term Asian Americans, refers to people originating from East Asia, Southeast Asia, Asian India, and the South Pacific. This group makes up 2% of the total population and is expected to raise that number by 9% by the turn of the century (Snyder, Hoffman, & Geddes, 1997 ). This group generally experience difficulties assimilating in the larger society and are often stereotyped because of distinguishable outward appearance such as skin color and physical features.

Traditionally, Asian American parents view education as a vehicle for upward mobility, therefore, parents hold high expectations and insist on long hours of study. Teachers generally adhere to the overachieving stereotype of Asian Americans and rate students from this culture more favorably than any other minority cultures. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of Asian American youths feel alienated and exhibit anti-social behaviors. Others feel intimidated and experience low self-esteem and feelings of helplessness. In addition, recent Asian American immigrants face a language barrier which often compounds academic and social difficulties.

Asian Americans generally value moderation, harmony, and peace in social relationships and avoid confrontation whenever possible. However, moderation and harmony are often maintained at the cost of personal happiness. Because of their value of personal privacy many Asian American students are seldom eager to share their problems with a teacher or a counselor. "Saving face" and preserving honor are also important elements in resolving problems. To prevent "losing face" individuals avoid direct confrontation, endure and accommodate to difficult situations. Asian cultures also value obedience and compliance to authority; therefore, traditional Asian American students may appear to be ambivalent, unassertive, indecisive, shy, and lacking leadership. To counteract this stereotype, many Asian American youth rebel, become overacculturated and reject their ethnic traditions in their quest for Americanization. These students have been socialized by their school peers and will go to great lengths to join the American mainstream. Their rebelliousness often places them at-risk with school authorities or with the law (Chin, 1990).

Strategies for teaching social skills to Asian Americans include direct instruction, behavioral strategies, cooperative learning, bibliotherapy, and journal writing. Journal writing and bibliotherapy are effective strategies because they encourage introspection and self-examination. These characteristics are highly valued by Asian American parents.

**Direct Instruction:** Direct instruction appears to be more effective than counseling with Asian American youth since these students are private with their feelings and "saving face" is important. Directly teaching responsible assertiveness training assists in improving personal relationships and in making responsible choices. Arthur Lange and Patricia Jakubowski (1973) incorporate four basic procedures in teaching assertiveness, they are: (1) teaching the difference between assertion and aggression and between nonassertion and politeness; (2) helping to identify and accept both personal rights and the rights of others; (3) reducing existing cognitive and affective obstacles to acting assertively; and (4) developing assertive skills through active practice methods. Teachers can simulate situations throughout the day to encourage the students to practice and generalize learned skills.

**Behavioral Strategies:** A written contract is a useful strategy that is written for an individual student or for a group of students. The Eastern culture emphasizes shame rather than the Western culture sense of guilt (Dao, 1991). A written contract is to be taken seriously, especially when parents are involved in developing the contract. Contingency contracts have been successfully implemented to modify aggressive and disruptive behaviors, and have been used with elementary and secondary students as well as with adults (Bagarozzi, 1984). The contract must specify the target behavior and the reinforcers for successfully achieving the goal of modifying or eliminating the behavior. General guidelines and timelines must be specified in the contract, and the involved individuals must sign on the dotted line indicating their understanding and agreement of the terms. The contract becomes more meaningful when parents also sign and agree to certain contingencies in the home. Teachers monitor and collect data on performance of the target behavior and discuss and rewrite the contract when no improvement is demonstrated.

**Cooperative Learning:** Heterogeneous grouping can increase understanding and promote friendships between students from different cultures and circumvent potential discipline problems. Motivating activities can serve to teach collaboration and acceptance. For example, an activity may revolve around Asian food. Asian American students can assume leadership in preparing the menu, and heterogeneous members of each group are given specific responsibilities to assemble and prepare an Asian banquet. Teachers can encourage the students to reflect on their experiences and to share them with the class (Pasternak, 1979) .

**Journal Writing:** Journal writing is a way to practice written language, to express feelings, to evaluate behavior, and to problem solve without "losing face". The students may share their journal with the teacher, another adult or with or a peer. Teachers can read and respond with helpful written comments without attention to grammatical and spelling errors. This type of activity encourages Asian American students to understand themselves through their writing and

to develop a communication system with another individual.

**Bibliotherapy:** Bibliotherapy is a technique that uses literature to help students develop self-awareness, and to better understand their problems. Characters in the book learn to cope with problems and situations that are similar to an existing problem within a classroom or with individual students. In addition, characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of story characters can serve as models (Hoagland, 1972). When targeting a specific problem in a classroom, the teacher must (1) clearly identify the problem, (2) select a story in literature that focuses on a similar problem, (3) read the story to the students, or direct the students to read the story, (4) ask questions that will cause the students to examine the emotional content of the literature. Example: How do you think the main character felt when he was not accepted in the group? Why did the members of the group reject him/her? How could they solve the problem? What can the main character do if the group refuses to change? When specific stories are not available, cooperative groups of students can be directed to create a story with a current problem as the main theme.

**Hispanic Americans**

Although Hispanic American students are a small minority in Louisiana (1.10), they constitute 15% of the total students enrolled in the nation's schools. Since 1980, this population has increased at a rate of five times greater than non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans and Asian Americans combined. Within the next decade, this population is expected to become the nation's largest minority group due to fast growing birth rates and immigration from Mexico, Central and South America (Snyder, Hoffman, & Geddes, 1997 ). Although this group is heterogeneous in composition, the population is united by a similar language. They also share a collectivistic philosophy, gender-specific roles, and strong family orientation.

Similar to African American and Asian American families, extended family members and close friends are warmly welcomed into the fold. Ramirez (1989) describes the Mexican American family as loving and exhibiting nurturing child rearing practices during the children's early development stages. The father is the main disciplinarian and his position in the family is superior to the mother's. Maternal discipline ranges from permissive to authoritative to authoritarian depending on the socioeconomic status and educational level.

Compared to Blacks and Whites, Hispanic American students enter school later and are more likely to drop out of school. They are less likely to enter college or complete a degree. Their SAT scores are significantly below the average and there is an over-representation of Hispanic American receiving special education services. There are few Hispanic teachers to serve as role models; the teacher/students ratio is one teacher for 64 students, as compared to 40 to 1 for African Americans, and 17 to 1 for White non-Hispanics (Hodgekins, 1992).

Problems encountered by Hispanic Americans center around language difficulties and poverty status. As recently as ten years ago, numerous schools prohibited students from speaking

their first language in schools. In addition, poor self-concept and ethnic identity often pose difficulties especially for male Hispanic American youth. As a result, they often seek acceptance by joining gangs or other anti-social groups. Hispanic youth account for 33% of gang memberships, and homicide rates are three to four times higher than non-minority peers (Soriano 1993). The media reinforces the negative statistics of Hispanic Americans thus creating stereotypes and prejudices. Even though the Hispanic temperament has been described as cooperative, obedient, and passive, many disadvantaged Hispanic American students find themselves in trouble resulting from aggressive and illegal act. According to Ramirez (1989), Mexican Americans are 14 times more likely than their Anglo counterparts to abuse inhalants. The use of alcohol, stimulants, tranquilizers, and heroin is also significantly higher among Hispanic Americans.

Professionals researching the learning styles of Hispanic Americans have suggested that the cognitive style of this group of individuals is more field dependent. Field dependent individuals tend to experience their environment globally and are more people oriented than field independent individuals. They openly express their feelings and are sensitive to the opinion of others. They are highly motivated when concepts are presented in humanized or story format ( Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974). Suggested strategies to teach social competence include direct instruction, cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and cognitive strategies. Instruction must be responsive to cultural differences and directed in developing ethnic pride.

**Direct Instruction:** Direct instruction must be culturally meaningful and must include organized instructional activities that create, reinforce, and communicate task demands. Teachers should give frequent feedback and convey a personal commitment and a caring attitude for students. Empowering students by involving them in their learning indicates that they are valued and appreciated. Teachers can add meaning when teaching appropriate behaviors by personalizing incidents and by relating the skills to the students' experiences. When learners indicate mastery of skills, they should be allowed to individualize their studies, and use their personal learning styles to achieve success.

**Cooperative Learning:** Hispanic Americans are people oriented and value interdependence in group activities. The success of a cooperative group rests in mutual respect for one another's ideas and contributions. Students must be taught to share without interruptions or put-downs, and to problem solve by giving appropriate feedback and reinforcement. It is essential that these skills are taught prior to forming the groups. Teachers may award group credit but must also expect individual accountability and equal individual opportunity to demonstrate skills.

**Integrated Thematic Learning:** Integrated Thematic Learning follows the same sequence as described for African American students. However, the activities and materials should be culturally relevant to Hispanic American students. Stories of historical Hispanic Americans are identified by deCortes (1992) in the book Our Family, Our Friends, and our world.

**Cognitive Instruction:** The principles of Cognitive Behavior Modification (CBM) and Rational Emotional Therapy (RET) can assist Hispanic American students with behavior problems to deal with anger control, self-management, self- monitoring and self-evaluation. A major goal of CBM is to teach persons to manage their own behaviors and to develop self-discipline. RET teaches that it's what you think and believe about facts and events that cause your feelings, and your actions usually follow your feelings. By changing your thoughts you can change your feelings and behavior.

**Conflict Resolution:** Cultural sensitivity promotes understanding. An understanding of the basic but unmet basic needs of students is important in teaching conflict resolution. Such understanding can clarify the nature of the conflict and pave the way to resolution. Mediation, negotiation and compromise are important elements in teaching conflict resolution and should be included in the
training. In addition, communication training is a fourth element that is especially important for language minority students.

**Behavioral Instruction**: Inappropriate behaviors usually do not occur at random, and are inter-related to the environment. Members of gangs receive their reinforcement from their social surroundings and from the attention, positive or negative, directed their way. The relationship between the setting, the behavior, and the consequence is called a **three-term contingency** or an ABC (antecedent-behavior-consequence) format. An understanding based on an ABC sequence can assist teachers to change an antecedent with assistance from other professionals. For example: Juan is the leader of a gang involved in illegal acts, mainly burglaries and theft. He has a police record and has failed his freshman year; Juan is on the verge of dropping out. His teacher recognizes his leadership potential, his logical-mathematical abilities, and his affinity for computers. She reviews her student's school records and family background and discovers that he is acting as surrogate father to his three younger siblings. His mother has given up control and Juan believes that he is responsible to provide for his family. The teacher seeks the help of school counselors, social workers, and an engineering firm willing to pay Juan for an apprenticeship. Juan works half-day and receives graduation credit for his work. He eventually completes his high school studies and plans to earn an engineering degree. In Juan's case, changing the antecedent modified his behavior. The consequence that followed reinforced him and led him to generalize his behavior towards higher educational goals.

Multi modal programs integrate behavioral analysis strategies with cognitive-behavioral techniques. Aggression Replacement (ART) is such a program that has been successfully used with young offenders involved with theft and drug use (Goldstein & Glick, 1994).

**Native Americans**

The original inhabitants of the United States make up less than 1% of the U.S. population and 45% of those living on reservation live in poverty; twenty-eight percent of all Native Americans fall below the poverty line. Unemployment ranges from 50 to 75%, and adolescent

suicide and alcoholism are alarmingly higher than among the majority counterpart. The high suicide rate (26.8 per 100,000) is attributed to problems of mental, behavioral or emotional causes, and extreme alienation from family and community. Fifty percent of Native American youth abuse drugs and alcohol, and have a high rate of accidental deaths due to drinking and driving. (Goley, 1992; Kallam, Hoernicke, & Coser, 1994).

Native Americans have a tradition of strong family and community ties. Parents encourage strong relationships with extended family members and other persons in the community. A community spirit of sharing and generosity is taught early on and children are expected to fulfill expected responsibilities and behavioral expectations. Discipline is gentle and physical punishment is not the norm. Parents clarify their expectations and consequences to their toddlers and verbalize displeasure when children disobey. Adolescence is particularly difficult and many young people often view themselves as strangers caught between two cultures. Identity problems and behavioral maladjustment contribute to anti-social and behavioral problems The high school drop out rate is estimated to be 85 to 90 percent. A high percentage of Native American children are identified as having learning disabilities, health impairments, and emotional and behavioral disorders. There is a shortage of Native American professionals due to low numbers of college graduates (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Brockern, 1990).

Teachers must become aware of certain social characteristics of Native American students. For example, eye-contact is considered intrusive, and open show of emotion is undesirable. Gestures are used sparingly and time perception is not considered as important as in the mainstream culture. The learning style of Native American students is strongly Haptic (tactile/kinesthetic), with visual and auditory attending. Thus a multisensory approach would be the preferred mode of learning. The Native Americans tradition was passed on the generations through story telling; therefore, bibliotherapy can serve as a conduit to teach pro-social skills. Cooperative learning would seem appropriate to a culture that values team work, loyalty, and cooperation. In Native American communities, elders are respected and revered for their knowledge and wisdom. This attitude can be transferred to teachers through the Direct Instruction process. Assertion training can be useful in teaching Native American students to cope with the demands of the White culture.

**Direct Instruction:** Direct teaching of substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) prevention has been found effective in some areas. Students were taught to resist peer pressure, and to evaluate situations through self-talk and problem solving (Schinke, Orlandi, Botvin, Gilchrist, Trimble, & Locklear, 1988). Direct instruction can also be effective in teaching students accommodation to other cultures and to acquire a positive self-identity and self-esteem.

**Cooperative Learning:** Native American students can profit from heterogeneous cooperative grouping. This type of grouping reflects the real world in which they must eventually operate. Through cooperative group work, students learn to assume responsibility and leadership. They also learn that they must depend on each other to accomplish the group's goal. Discrimination is

not allowed and inter-cultural relationships are encouraged and reinforced. Students engage in reciprocal teaching and learning. They share social customs and pro-social behaviors; additionally, they can share cultural modes of discipline and what behaviors warrants light or severe consequences.

**Bibliotherapy:** The Native American culture values storytelling. Parents transmitted the history of their ancestors through verbal narratives. Topics such as courage, inner-control, harmony, and unconditional love, are found in many Native American legends. Goley (1992) presents a bibliography of Native American books for students and teachers that can be used to teach altruistic values and perhaps contribute to the prevention of destructive behaviors.

**Assertion Training:** Assertion training may be useful in resisting peer pressure and in developing a philosophy that is contrary to self-destructive behaviors. In addition, this type of training can increase self-esteem and responsible behaviors. It can reduce irrational thinking, excessive anxiety, guilt, negative self-concept, and anger. Through responsible assertion training, Native American students can be taught to feel empowered and in tune with the mainstream culture without betraying their own cultural beliefs.

**Creative Expression:** Activities employing Native American art and crafts, music, and cultural dances can provide educators with a vehicle to counteract negative stereotypes and to examine the richness of a culture that had been labeled as "savage". Through understanding native American arts students learn to appreciate a creative culture and promote interracial friendships in inclusive classrooms.

**Behavioral Instruction:** Token economies reinforcement programs teach delayed gratification and can be individualized for different reinforcer preferences. Teachers identify the behaviors needing modification, the medium of exchange (stars, points), the final reinforcers (items or activities), and the exchange value of each reinforcer (is it worth 1 or 10 tokens). In addition, students are taught how the system works and how they can be included in planning a menu of reinforcers. Teachers should make an effort to insure that students do not experience a zero balance; the reinforcer menu should include some inexpensive items that can be purchased with just one token. Response cost is the systematic withdrawal of tokens for inappropriate behaviors. A disadvantage of response-cost is that students may "give up" if they are constantly fined and broke and may eventually resent the teacher for removing the tokens. Opportunities for earning extra tokens should be provided if response-cost, is included in a token economy program.

**Conclusion**

Teaching social skills is a proactive approach to managing behavior. Schools and home often rely on reactive measures to eliminate anti-social behaviors. While these measures may frequently stop the behavior, they do not teach new behaviors and suspension of unacceptable behaviors is temporary. Youngsters from all cultures and sub-cultures need to be taught self-regulation and self-reliance to internalize the mores and expectations of the greater society in

which they reside. However, adults must become cognizant and accepting of diverse customs within their communities. Students feel empowered when educators support cultural literacy and pluralism in schools. Bilingual students must be applauded rather than shamed for speaking two languages. Different learning styles and multiple intelligences must be considered to give students successful experiences. Many of the suggested strategies are suitable for students from all cultures and ethnic backgrounds when teachers individualize these strategies to meet the individual needs of each student. There is no basic difference in being different, we all share in our humanity and in our need to be accepted and celebrated.

## References

Bagarozzi, D. (1984). Applied intervention in rural schools settings: Problems in research design, implementation and evaluation. Clinical Social Work Journal, 12, 43-56.

Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Brendtro, L.., Brokenleg, M., & Van Brockern, D. (1990). Reclaiming youth at risk. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Bulletin 1472. (1996). Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Department of Education.

Cartledge, G. (1996). Cultural diversity and social skills instruction: Understanding ethnic and gender differences. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Chin, K. (1990). Chinese subcultures and criminality. New York: Greenwood.

Dao, M. (1991). Designing assessment procedures for educationally at-risk Southeast

deCortes, O.G. (1992). United States: Hispanic Americans. In L. Miller-Lachmann (Ed.), Our family, our friends, our world. New Providence, NJ: Bowker.

Goldstein, A,. & Glick, B. (1994). Aggression replacement therapy: A comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Goley, E. (1992). United States: Native Americans. In L. Miller-Lachmann (Ed.), Our family, our friends, our world. New Providence, NJ: Bowker.

Griggs, S., & Dunn, R. (1989). The learning style of multicultural groups and counseling implications. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 17, 146-155.

Hoagland, J. (1972, March). Bibliotherapy: Aiding children in personality development. Elementary English, 390-394.

Hodgekins, H. (1992). A demographic look at tomorrow. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership Inc.

Kallam, M., Hoernicke, P., & Coser, P. (1994). Native Americans and behavioral disorders. In R.L. Peterson & S. Ishii-Jordan (Eds.), Multicultural issues in the education of students with behavioral disorders. Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

King, S.H. (1993). The limited presence of African American teachers. Review of Educational Research, 63, 115-149.

Lang, A. & Jakubowski, P. (1973). Responsible assertive behavior. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Pasternak, M.G. (1979). Helping kids learn multi-cultural concepts: A handbook of strategies. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Ramirez, M., & Castaneda, A. (1974). Cultural democracy: Bi-cognitive development and education. New York: Academic Press.

Ramirez, O. (1989). Mexican American children and adolescents. In J.T. Gibbs, L.N. Huang, Associates (Eds.), Children of color. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Richardson, R.C., & Evans, E.T. (1997). Connecting with Others: Lessons for teaching social and emotional competence. Grades 6-8, Vol. 3. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Schinke, S., Orlandi, M., Botvin, G., Gilchrist, L., Trimble, J., & Locklear, V. (1988). Preventing substance abuse among American-Indian adolescents. A bi-cultural competence skills approach. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 35, 87-90.

Snyder, T., Hoffman, C., & Geddes, C. (1997). Digest of Education Statistics. Washington, DC: National Center for education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Soriano, F. (1993). Cultural sensitivity and gang intervention. In A.P. Goldstein & C.R. Huff (Eds.), The gang intervention handbook. Champaign, IL: Research Press.